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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Public comment-- Docket #:02-277
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Gentlemen:

It is always good practice to review policies and rules from time to time. After all situations change and the effectiveness of any rule may change with the new circumstances. So I applaud your commission's year end review of communications policies and the rides intended to implement these policies.

As good Americans this review should be approached, foremost, from the perspective of insuring that the diverse population of this great country is honestly and equably served. It is imperative that narrow interests are not handed control of resources that are the property of all the public.

Since the 1930s it has been public policy that the "airwaves," the electronic magnetic spectrum used for communication of all types, is the property of all the people of America. Use of frequencies by private parties is governed by the FCC. Administered as a loan of public resources that must be used for the benefit of the public as a whole. Not to be a cash cow for some private profit making enterprise. Users of the electrometric spectrum must provide some public benefit.

This said, I am concerned with trends that undermine this concept of public trust. It is imperative that the policy of public benefit be paramount. Cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast media leave many communities with only one source of news. This is such an un-American state of affairs. What you expect to find under a dictatorship, not in America. This country's economy has always been based on competition. This is what made America strong.

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Chain ownership of newspapers, television and radio stations is increasing dramatically, with all-too-familiar consequences: layoffs as formerly independent news divisions merge, less original content and even further cuts in local affairs coverage. Not to mention the negative effects on the economy from the loss of jobs.

Commercial broadcasting has gone through stunning negative changes in recent years,. Deregulation and consolidation have shifted the balance of power to a small handful of companies with interests and investments alien *to* the locale their media operate in. We now live in a world dominated by profit-driven advertisers instead of serving the needs of the public.

Other political viewpoints are routinely ignored or marginalized in national media, and the interests and perspectives of women, people of color, and labor, are consistently underrepresented. Across the country, broadcast public affairs programs that address local concerns are almost non-existent; many communities can't even expect any coverage of their local elections on TV.

Independent, critical and genuinely representative media are crucial to a healthy democracy. Without them, citizens lose the means *to* participate in the public debate that sets the nation's political agenda. In the absence of an effective regulatory agency, corporate control of the media is damaging our democracy.

This country's airwaves belong to the American people. The FCC should manage them in the public interest for all America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Wilson', written over the printed name.

Bob Wilson